trans/ce

a trance music fanzine
queering & transing trance

slumbi 2024

"To exist inside these beats... allows my body to be a fucking body." - McKenzie Wark

This is a trance music fanzine about the queerness and transness of trance music. There's also some history of Melbourne's early raves and a couple of playlists. I hope you like it and maybe find a love for trance and other music that we might queer and reclaim and allow to live different lives themselves as music genres, against commodification and toxification of our beautiful and diverse cultures.

This fanzine was made by Slumbi in April 2024 on the stolen lands of the Central Arrernte people. Slumbi is a genderqueer trans femme who makes dreamy ambient music, DJs uplifting trance & techno, and makes lots of zines. She has been making music and organising gigs, protests & raves for 18 years.

"We're in a trance that's under and around us."
- Fred Moton & Stefano Harney

timeline of dance music & raves in Melbourne...

1979 - disco gains a following in Melbourne, popularised through Italian & gay clubs
mid 80's - Hip hop gains a following in Melbourne, graffiti, breakdancing, MCing & DJing proliferate
1986-87 - Hip hop most popular dance music, but disco & soul still popular in the gay clubs
1987 - first house music played in a club in Melbourne
1987 - Melbourne's 'rave' scene first emerges, playing mostly house
1988-90 - Techno & acid house emerge & become most popular, Melbourne is an early lover of techno & acid house
1988 - police raid of Checkpoint Charlie nightclub trying to suppress the drugs that are undermining alcohol sales
1988 - Hip hop clothing label Renegade starts in Melbourne
1989 - Techno playing five nights a week in Melbourne clubs, "3am was always techno hour somewhere in Melbourne"
1989-90 - Biology, Kemistri & Cyber, original wave of organised 'raves' in Melbourne, begin to disrupt the established clubs
1990 - Maze, first dedicated techno nightclub in Australia
1990 - first house music radio show Rhythmatic, on 3RRR
1990-91 - first Australian electronic dance music tracks released, a mix of techno & acid house
1991-92 - Hardcore techno most popular genre in the city
1991 - Octave dance music record store opens, Prahran
1991 - Renegade clothing label gets into rave wear, but most people are op shopping & making their own clothes
1993-00's - Trance arrives and becomes the most popular genre for a decade
1993 - Tranzmission, radio show on 3RRR, first trance music radio show in Australia
1994 - KissFM first dedicated dance music radio station in Australia
1994 - Hardware record store opens, dedicated to dance music
mid 90's - outdoor raves 'bush doofs' become more popular than warehouse raves

trans/ce?

No one really listens to trance anymore. Well, maybe in a worn out beachfront club on Ibiza, stuck in a bit of a timeloop. Straight punishers, the DJ, a man, feeding off her brilliance, the parasites of patriarchy and capital. But she still shines, the music ~trance herself~ like femininity, like paradise, like utopia, like queerness, transness, she battles on singing the hopes and dreams, seeping them in. The poor thing. Poor trance. I love her.

She was never really made by the men (whom we know well), though they birthed her, she was going to come out for us one way or another. The shufflers and the gays and speaker gremlins, the blackness of techno, the gayness of house, conceived her in a polycule. Could she help it that a tear in the spacetime continuum just happened to form in Nuremberg? No. Cosmic Baby. An act beyond the appearance. A sound beyond the body. Watching videos of him performing, we're actually watching videos of trance performing him. Trance is beyond us, something else.

She bubbled away for years (1988-91), a sister of techno really, a more uplifting and euphoric kind of techno that went deep with the entrancing arpeggiated synths, motioned towards a better world, or perhaps reflected the beautiful and complex feelings gushing from the rave scenes. An emotional/hysterical music, empowered, at times bittersweet, carrying that techno-futurist rhythm, learning to love again. And we loved her.

Popular longer than disco, hip hop, house, acid house, and techno, trance was Melbourne's guilty pleasure, singing the sunrise to every raver from 1993 until the mid 2000's. Including me! The first parties and clubs I went to were so full of trance I thought that's what all dance music was. Like a relationship caught in a cycle of disconnection, trapped in conflict, trance and I felt a deep love that never got to flourish. Toxic masculinity soaked the sweaty rooms, the cis-hets trampled. Alcohol everywhere, drunk people. The DJs untouchable, seemingly all men. I was just a body there was no place for. A sober body. A failed boy. Bullied even by these crowds. I didn't know my people, who were at the good raves, where my relationship with trance might have been nurtured. And maybe dance music ~trance~ wouldn't have been alienated from me.

I'm with a little crew of music friends from high school, 2004. Finally, we were all 18, and going out on the town, which meant losing $40 at the casino, feeling awkward in front of your mates at the strip clubs, and ending up at a nightclub in the Palais in St.Kilda. This particular night-club was dodgy af. I was first introduced to it as the "meat market". When I walked in it looked like a giant RSL from the suburbs flooded with the polo sleeves and muscles of ostensibly straight suburban boys. I lose my friends immediately, who are all protective of me as the smol child of the group. Or maybe they'll just get into the shit with our mums if they lose me. But I'd like to lose them, and lose myself in the crowd, and try to understand this music. None of us know what to do in here, so we go out into the carpark to hang out. Pay to sit in the club carpark with 400 other people, and chat to each other, in the cold city air under the half moon.

I want to make it work, me and trance. I want to feel connected and high and loved up and drift away with those soaring synths and luscious pianos. I know, I know, I've always loved those 1992 haircuts on the grunge boys, and feel like Kurt and Courtney understand me. Grunge was and will always be there with me. But it's too fucking sad. And that feminist grunge, that riot grrrl, is for girls, which in 1999, I'm not allowed to like, because I'm apparently a boy, and boys can't like pop. Especially not the Spice Girls. Sometimes, when that alien's head nods to Eifel 65's "Blue (Da Ba Dee)" on Rage again, there's something a bit different I can maybe tell people I like. Eurodance? A pop for boys? My trajectory into queerness entwined with my trajectory into punk & indie music, like my trajectory into transness entwined with my trajectory into pop & dance music. But as the lock is picked, the door cracks open, you don't really know how to walk through. What even goes on in there? Femininity? Electronic dance music? What are these? How do I understand myself that I like these things? How then to tell people I like these things and how then to behave in the cultures of these things in ways that situate you in some kind of normalcy, to be valid, to be accepted?

When I heard trance again, more as myself, and with a love, it was new and first in extra ways. I wanted to dance to these tracks. I wanted to play these tracks for people to dance to. I wanted to make this music. But it's not really popular anymore. Even in the queer/trans clubs and at the raves, it's all polyrhytmic techno overlaps, drum & bass, r& b. That's nice though, but poor trance, where is she? The more I sit with her, I feel like there's some healing to be done, some reclaimation. Everyone loved her and now they shun her cuz she hung out with some bad boys. I think there's more to her story.

You see, trance is trans, and queer of course, in so many ways. Themes of transmission, transition, transferrance, tranceformation, and transportation, transcend mere alliteration and accident into a uniquely transgender/transexual realm not often seen in music. In trance, we're going somewhere, we're changing, we're evolving, it's a fucking journey, it's beautiful and difficult, fast and hard, soft and slow, all in 8 minutes. She's trans!

The trance I love is uplifting, empowering, hopeful, sprawling, rich. These things I associate with the direction queerness and transness moves us in. Trance music then, moves me here too. It's a good queering/transing lube. Sliding smoothly across ourselves, into ourselves. And it feels good as it caresses your ear. Trance is full of lush as fuck synthesised landscapes. The piano introductions, interludes and breaks. Like the orchestral arrangements of disco, but the future, maybe always sliding into the future, forever young, as some of us transexuals are, in the visible or internal youth.

It's rhythms are familiar, like the body is, mostly, partly. Techno in all our hearts, driving us somewhere, but when tranced, the vehicle is a warm embrace. Any destination possible, including utopia. And then on the vinyl, healing my needle trauma one spiral at a time, sensitive to the dust as to the hiss of the digitally-emulated tape delay, then trapped in the body of the record again, to be again forever imperfect. And her human voice, the femme and the camp voice, appropriated and sometimes unpaid, but elevated to the centre. She speaks to us in affirmations of life and love and nature and the cosmos. She tells us everything is okay and everything will be better. "do you know what it feels like for a girl?", "feels like... heaven, heaven is closer", "falling free", "you, you aaaaaaaare aliiiiiiiive", "you're like the sun, 'cause you shine on everyone", "falling free", and of course sometimes it's hot as sapphic sin: "it's like an ocean wave, I wanna get closer, deeper into you", "let's come together, right now, in sweet harmony".

And her fashion, her aesthetic, the pinks and reds and purples and blues fading into each other, not just feminine but with dashes of hardness, butchness, maleness, boyness. The dolphins and stars and nebulae, oceans and galaxies and fire, clouds and sunsets and skin, spirals, spirals, disrupted curves spinning endlessly even though the turntable has lost power, curves the soccer and motorracing motifs arc their backs to out of masculinity, or towards a different one. Light refracted into rainbows, sparkling off water. Gentle wave after gentle wave drenching, subsuming, immersing. McKenzie Wark talks about how letting yourself go in the music involves deciding to submit to it, letting the music fuck you, being fucked by the music. Trance seduces. She wants you to submit to her dreamy techno entrancement.

Fred Moton & Stefano Harney wrote in 2013, that the "social chromaticisms" driving electronic dance music are "always also a regendering, a transgendering" and that blackness lies in them. Blackness and transness are together in the blood of electronic dance music, as is queerness. What then of trance, whomst was birthed by German (white, ostensibly straight) men? Of course blackness lies at the heart of trance, not least because she is a daughter of techno, in the family of blackness, but because that the regendering is there too. Trance overflos with campness and femmeness, despite the best efforts of patriarchy and whiteness acting through the men of Frankfurt and Nuremberg, or because of the openness and experimentation they acted through, or perhaps the work of the femmes, queers and othered in their lives. Already in this paragraph, they have been transed to "they/them". Trance made as much by the dancers and the underground radio announcers and the art dripping from the warehouse ceilings, all driven by queer femininity. A queer femininity that has always disrupted binary gender even when/as it clings to trans exclusion. Trance always was and always will be black and trans and queer, but her trueness in these paradises is for sure masked, ignored, invalidated, repressed. A repression overdriven by her commodification outside the raves, to the point that so many of us see her as a white cis/straight man. Let's not lose the truth of her.

There are a few articles and blog posts on the internet claiming a resurgence of trance within underground dance music, led by queer DJs and producers, and like so much in this world so many of us are learning of trance's femininity, transness and black history, for the first time. As the palette of dance music is the past, this is what we build from, borrowing a sawtooth wave here, and a sidechain compressed practice from there, from her. Trance is seeping it's way back onto the dancefloors of the underground, the raves, and I couldn't be happier. Hearing all the ways producers bring trance into their music, all the OG and cheesy and dreamy trance DJs mix into their sets. She goes so well with contemporary queer techno. If only her trans femme siblings were given half the chances her cis femme rediscoverers are enjoying. Perhaps this too is why I make a zine about her, for her transness to stay visible. I worry it will be be left behind by the cissexism and transmisogyny still so pervasive in even the raves and underground dancefloors we love. Let her trans sisters help in her rebirth. Lest we value future commodification more than we do the lives of our friends.

a contemporary trans/ce playlist...

Paramida - Sailor Moon House
Alex Kassian - Oolong Trance
Julie Desire - Keep Moving
Octo Octa - Late Night Love
Maara - Miss Sweetie's Inferno
Julie Desire - Dennier Souffle
Jennifer Loveless - ECC
Julie Desire - Incisive
Sina XX - Colour of People
Julie Desire - Express Your Love
Female Wizard - Post Release
Sina XX - Dancefloor is Hot
dj genderfluid - trancing 4ever
Dr. Rubinstein666 - Extacid
Female Wizard - Lock Screen
Bored Lord - In My Soul
Byron Yeates - Sweat Ur Prayers
Gendered Dekonstruktion - The Future is Non-Binary (dj genderfluid remix)
dj genderfluid - love arpeggiator
Maara - The Forbidden Plum
Jennifer Loveless - Syzygy (Scissor Me)
Byron Yeates - Waves
Female Wizard - Pagan Youtube
Priori - Your Own Power
Tami T - Trans Femme Bonding

tinyurl.com/transceplaylist2

an OG/classic trans/ce playlist...

Evolution - Free Your Mind
Transform - Transformation
Phantasia - Inner Light
SYN - If Only You Could See...
Cosmic Baby - Fantasia (Celestial Harmonies)
Tranceporter - Open Up Your Mind
Mad Mike - The Illuminator
Hole in One - X-Paradise (DJ G-Spot Mix)
Virtual Symmetry - See You
Evolution - Sparkling Sun
Trance Team - Breath of Life
Transformer 2 - Pacific Symphony (Original Mix)
Garden of Eden - Falling Free (original 12")
Transformer 2 ft. Asli - Just Can't Get Enough
Microglobe - High On Hope (The Long Hot Summer mix)
Fragma - You Are Alive (Praha Remix)
Madonna - What it Feels Like For a Girl (Above & Beyond Remix)
Dario G - Heaven is Closer (Lange Remix)
Matt Darey - Liberation (Fly Like An Angel) (Ferry Corsten Remix)
Angelic - It's My Turn (Original 12")
Binary Finary - 1999
Sour Mash - Pilgrimage To Paradise
Isis Overload - The Great Unveiling
The Age Of Love - The Age Of Love (Watch Out For Stella Mix)
Stardiver - Someday (Trance Mix)
Taucher & Koma - Happiness (Tour de Trance Mix)
Humate - Curious (Inquisitive Remix By Paul van Dyk)
Transa - Perpetua
Microbots - Freedom
Quench - Dreams (Original)
Pulsation - Transpulsation
Third Eye - New Life
PJ - Elysian Fields

tinyurl.com/transceplaylist1

women in Melbourne's early rave scene...

Kate Bathgate
often described as the most influential person in Melbourne's electronic dance music scene in the early 90's, she started & presented the radio show "Beat in the Street", later renamed to "Tranzmission" reflecting the popularity of trance, broadcast on 3RRR from 1991 or 92 , featured guest interviews with everyone from the scene, and mixes by all kinds of people, bringing dance music genres to the airwaves for the first time.

Lani G
queer DJ and event orgainser. She mixed what she describes as "machine gun Goa trance" and Italian "techno", and started without beatmatching. She organised events with her sister Kylie Greer, and has six ingredients to running a good party: sound, lineup, art, drugs, safety, venue.

Cara Caama
started DJing after seeing Cosmic Baby's first performance in Melbourne in 1993, had a radio show too! (can't find any info on her radio show).

Hydi John
the mother of raves, migrated from the UK to Melbourne in the late 80's and organised the first raves in Melbourne with her partner Richard.

Emmy Boudry
Organised the first 'Street Rave' parties in 1991, which became an official part of the Fringe Festival by 1993. The street party culture remained a feature of Melbourne into the mid 2010's, with the Sydney Road Music Festival the only one left.

Many other women, queers & gender diverse people were involved in every aspect of raves and dance music in Melbourne, importing records, scouting locations, creating art, stage designs, lighting, fixing equipment, promotion, and producing new music.

Emmy Boudry
Kate Bathgate
Cara Caama
Lani G
MYTIKO
CHALL
Kiss
adidas

some concepts of raving...

from McKenzie Wark

xeno-euphoria
forms of bodily wellness achievable only through external agents, which at the same time produce euphoric states of welcome strangeness. an alternate but not incomparable need to *ravespace* or *enlustment* that can be derived from *constructed situations* that generate *k-time*

reparative discrimination
entry through the threshold to *constructed situations* selectively granted to those who need it most, so that some parcel of *femmunism* may be bestowed for a moment, that the *surround* may be touched, before *style extraction* takes it away

femmunism
a collective state emerging out of a *constructed situation* from which masculinity that expresses itself as domination is subtracted as technically obsolete. achieved in part by *reparative discrimination*. it has no necessary *ongoingness*, no memory, no relation to desired futures, and appears only momentarily. where girls and their familiars get their rave on, where *ravespace*, *enlustment*, and *xeno-euphoria* can happen among them. not utopian as it can still all go wrong.
it touches the *surround*

enlustment
one of several dissociative aesthetics that might be found in *k-time*. to feel body as an intense kernel of expansive lust indifferent to *ongoingness*. a different need from *ravespace* in that it's a dissociation of subjectivity but into flesh. different also from *xeno-euphoria* in that it doesn't commune with strangeness but with the most ordinarily mammilian. these are maybe all states of "ressociation" if one were to further develop these practices toward their concept

sidechain time
the time of collective, world-historical dissociation. each rave in the *rave continuum* sidechains a *k-time* signal, clean and clear, through the noise of historical time, which it compresses down toard silence, but just for the moment of rave. the rave continuum happens, and feels like a steady techno beat, only because each rave sidechains all other time, that the rave might spool sideways into the *surround*

some queer & trans producers today working in a bit of trance...

octo octa

jennifer loveless

rubi666

bored lord

paramida

sina xx

julie desire

maara

female wizard

"Here's a bit of Trance for you"

- Kate Bathgate, 1993

"You need only good ideas, a drum machine, two good synthes, and then you can play." - Cosmic Baby, 1993

"what we were tryingto do as well was to create an environtment where you didn't have to take any drugs or anything like that to be stimulated and excited!"_ Richard John

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